



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY279729

DfES Number: 540717

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 08/02/2005
Inspector Name Deborah Jaqueline Newbury

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Thames Valley Park Children's Centre
Setting Address Building 4, Microsoft Campus
Thames Valley Park
Reading
Berkshire
RG6 1WG

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Bright Horizons Family Solutions Ltd 02328679

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Bright Horizons Family Solutions Ltd
Address 2 Crown Court
Crown Way
Rushden
Northamptonshire
NN10 6BS

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

Thames Valley Park Children's Centre is a private day nursery run by Bright Horizons Family Solutions Ltd. It opened in 2003 and operates from premises on the Microsoft Campus on the Thames Valley Park, near Reading, Berkshire. Children are accommodated in two age related home bases on the ground floor of one of the Microsoft buildings. There are suitable toilet, nappy change and kitchen facilities. Children share access to an enclosed garden. The nursery offers childcare facilities to both employees of Microsoft and families within the local community. The nursery is served by a free bus from Reading town centre and is close to junction 10 of the M4.

A maximum of 52 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 52 children, aged from 4 months to 4 years, on roll, of these 5 receive funding for nursery education. The setting makes provision for children with special needs and/or who speak English as an additional language. Children may attend for a variety of sessions.

The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 07.30 to 18.30 with the exception of Bank Holidays and Christmas.

The nursery employs fifteen staff. Eleven members of staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Four members of staff are working towards achieving these. Twelve members of staff hold a current first aid certificate. The provision also employs a cook and contract cleaners who are responsible for housekeeping.

The setting receives support from a mentor/advisor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

How good is the Day Care?

Thames Valley Park Children's Centre offers good quality care to children. The nursery is well organised with effective deployment of staff, use of space and

resources to enable children to enjoy a range of play opportunities and activities both indoors and outside. There is a comprehensive operational plan that covers all aspects of the provision and provides a useful tool for staff to refer to. Staff work together as a team and provide a warm and welcoming environment where children are settled and happy. The staff team exceeds minimum qualification requirements. Required documentation is in place and is well organised.

Staff give good attention overall to safety issues and are vigilant of children. However, the kitchen door is left open, enabling children to access this area of the nursery independently. Staff follow good practices with regard to health and hygiene. Premises are clean and well maintained. The nursery caters for children's dietary needs and staff respect babies' individual feeding routines. All staff have recently attended child protection training and have a good understanding of issues relating to this. Parents are made aware of the setting's responsibilities.

Children enjoy exploring an interesting range of play materials and participate in various activities. Resources are age appropriate and are arranged to encourage children to help themselves and make decisions about what they do. Items reflect positive images of all aspects of diversity. Staff treat children as individuals and with equal concern and they form good relationships with them. They are aware of the importance of matching behaviour management strategies to children's levels of understanding and maturity.

Parents and staff share information about children both informally and formally. Parents receive detailed information about the setting although this does not include the setting's policy with regard to special needs. Staff seek written consent for all aspects of care.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable.

What is being done well?

- The nursery offers a welcoming environment that is very child friendly. Staff display children's artwork throughout all areas. It is named with much of it placed at low level which helps children understand that their efforts are valued. The outside play area offers scope for different learning experiences.
- Children have access to a stimulating range of equipment, toys and materials which are likely to support their overall development, Resources are of good quality, they are interesting and offer challenge. The effective organisation of play materials means that children can make independent choices about what they do, in particular the older children, and thus, they make their own decisions about what they do and are helped to become independent learners.
- Staff act as positive role models and have a calm, gentle manner with children. They adopt a consistent approach and use praise and positive reinforcement to encourage children's good behaviour.

- There is a happy atmosphere at the nursery. Staff are kind and caring. They spend time talking with children and show interest in what they are doing. Staff working with babies make a point of talking to them about what they are going to do before they do it, for example, they talk about needing to change their nappies.
- The nursery operates an open door policy. Parents are welcome to visit their children during the course of the day if they wish and staff regularly communicate with parents both face to face and by email. Parents are encouraged to contribute their ideas via the parent liaison group.
- The nursery has a high percentage of qualified staff and once those staff members currently attending training courses have completed their courses, the whole staff team will hold Level 3 qualifications.

What needs to be improved?

- arrangements for restricting children's independent access to the nursery kitchen
- arrangements for sharing the setting's special needs policy with parents.

PREVIOUS COMPLAINTS (This section applies only to inspections carried out from September 2004. The complaint record relates to complaints from the last inspection or 1st April 2004 whichever is later.)

There are no complaints to report.

Outcome of the inspection

Good

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection

Std	Recommendation
6	improve existing arrangements for restricting children's independent

	access to the nursery kitchen
12	ensure that the setting's policy on special needs is made available to parents

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

The quality of nursery education at Thames Valley Park Children's Centre is acceptable and of good quality overall. Children make generally good progress towards the early learning goals of communication, language and literacy and mathematics. Their progress in other areas of learning is very good.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff are caring and relate to children in positive ways. They act as positive role models and manage children and their behaviour well, for example encouraging sharing and good manners. Staff have an understanding of the early learning goals and are developing their use of planning. Plans do not always show what the learning focus of some activities is although staff have recognised the need to develop this further and are actively addressing this. They regularly undertake observations to monitor children's achievements and progress. Staff are very much guided by children's interests and they respond well to these, using a variety of different teaching methods. However, there are some missed opportunities evident in the areas of mathematics and communication, language and literacy. Staff foster children's spiritual, moral social and cultural development appropriately.

Leadership and management are generally good. Staff work together well as a team. The provision is monitored both by the nursery's management team and through regular visits from the company's regional manager. Areas for further development has been identified, for example, planning procedures, training and providing more information for parents, through play sessions. There is a positive attitude towards the improvement of care and education for all children.

Partnership with parents is very good. Parents have access to good quality information about the setting and its provision. They are well informed about their children's progress and achievements through informal discussion and regular meetings with their children's keyworker.

What is being done well?

- Staff foster children's personal, social and emotional development well. Children display confidence in their environment, they are settled and self-assured. They enjoy helping staff, for example as they clear away and wash the tables after playing with clay and helping to fill the water tray using a long pipe which they attach to the water tap.
- Children are encouraged to freely explore the varied and stimulating range of resources available to them. Staff offer support and guidance as necessary but do not restrict children's explorations unless on safety grounds. They allow children sufficient time to develop their ideas.
- Staff are guided by children's interests and they build on these. For example,

children spending a considerable length of time looking at a book about re-cycling with a member of staff are then inspired to create their own re-cycling factory. They are encouraged by the member of staff to look through the varied range of bottles and boxes to be found in the "art studio" and select those items they think they need. The member of staff points out the re-cycling symbol on various boxes and invites children to see if they can find these on other packaging.

- Staff make good use of open ended questions to encourage children to think, express themselves and to predict possible outcomes.
- Children enjoy regular outings off site, for example, they visit a local nature reserve, the library, train station and "safety street." By including such outings, staff are able to help children find out about their environment.
- Parents have regular meetings with their child's keyworker to discuss progress and achievements. Staff produce written reports and identify the next steps in children's learning. They encourage parents to contribute to this process. Parents are given ideas for activities they may like to do with their children at home through newsletters and are able to borrow books from the nursery to share with their children.

What needs to be improved?

- the continued development of the setting's planning procedures
- greater use of opportunities that arise to build on children's problem solving skills and the display of written numerals to reinforce children's awareness of numbers as labels
- opportunities for children to build on their phonic awareness by linking sounds and letters.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are active learners. They make decisions about what they wish to do and concentrate for long periods of time to complete chosen tasks. They enjoy helping. Children are encouraged to be independent. They regularly practice and build on their self-help skills, for example, as they fill the water jugs and pour drinks. They are confident and sociable and form good relationships with others. They show interest in what other children are doing.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children have good spoken language and listening skills. They converse with others, express ideas and listen to stories. Children handle books with care and choose to spend time in the Book corner. They enjoy looking at books and show particular interest in non fiction books. Children make marks, using a variety of writing materials. Some give meaning to the marks they make. Whilst some can form recognisable letters, there are missed opportunities to build on their phonic awareness.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children use number during the course of their play or in conversation with others. They recognise numerals and count well. They sort and match, use comparative language as they discuss size and position. They name colours and shapes. There are missed opportunities to encourage children to count as part of the session and to build on their developing problem solving skills. The limited display of written numerals around the room restricts children's awareness of numbers as labels.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children investigate different objects. They use their senses as they participate in such activities as cooking, growing plants and making papier-mache. They are presented with a wide range of resources to explore which enable them to learn about different forms of everyday technology, such as a light box, computer and overhead projector. They enjoy design and making activities using interesting materials. They discuss events in their own lives and regularly explore the local community.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children move safely and carefully with good awareness of others. They investigate different ways of moving both independently and through such planned activities as "Tots in Sports" where they jump, hop, run and learn to control balls using hockey sticks. They use wheeled toys and stilts. Children freely explore a wide range of equipment, tools and materials and practice and improve their skills. They are aware of their personal hygiene and recognise the need to drink when they are thirsty.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children explore an interesting range of easily accessible media and materials in the well resourced art studio. They freely express their own ideas, for example through paint and clay work and spend sustained periods of time exploring the different properties of these. They use their imaginations as they build rockets using large 3d blocks and create a re-cycling factory using a selection of materials. They have a repertoire of songs and rhymes and regularly explore musical instruments.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- continue to develop planning procedures to clearly show the learning focus of activities
- make greater use of opportunities that arise to build on children's problem solving skills and use the display of written numerals to reinforce children's awareness of numbers as labels
- provide more opportunities for children to build on their phonic awareness by linking sounds and letters.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.